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The Orthodox Herald

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THE SUNDAYS OF LENT

February 24. This 1st Sunday of Lent. Gospel Reading - John 1:43-51.

Jesus tells Philip to follow Him. Philip found Nathanael and tells him that they have found Him who is written about in the Old Testament. Jesus' call to "Follow Me" is in a sense addressed to all of us and He promises us that believing right will let us "see the heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

This is listed as The Sunday of Orthodoxy or of the True Faith. It combines the joy of the restoration of ikons for worship in the year 812 with a reminder of the teachings of the Orthodox faith. In cathedrals, ikons are carried in procession to the main body of the church. A special service is held in their presence, which includes petitions asking God's help for those present to persevere in the true faith and asks those who have become apostates or heretics to return to the right path. The Creed is proclaimed which contains the doctrines which the Church and its followers expouse. An enumeration of false doctrines follows and then an anathema or formal separation from the Church of all those who hold these false beliefs. Eternal Memory is wished for all who died upholding the right doctrines.

March 3. The 2nd Sunday of Lent. Gospel Reading - Mark 2:1-12.

Jesus healed a paralytic which infuriated His adversaries. They were starting to think about stopping Him. Who did He think He was saying He could forgive sins?

This Sunday is dedicated to St. Gregory of Palamas. He practiced an elaborate form of mysticism and wrote that we must try to attain perfect quietude of our body and mind to attain the Vision of the Uncreated Light of God. It is not an exact analogy but many find features of yoga in some of the practices. We have to concentrate on the things of God, to find Him.

March 10. The 3rd Sunday of Lent. Gospel Reading - Mark 8:34-9:1.

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Mid the hurry and turmoil of a busy, troubled day.
Crowded with a thousand duties lurking ever in my way,
Oft there comes a still small whisper of the One I cannot see,
"Have you no time left for Jesus, no time to commune with ME?"

PLAIN TALK WITH GOD

This whole month of March is part of Great Lent — a penitential season during which we should be recharging our spiritual batteries; and reconditioning ourselves, our souls, and our bodies so that we may offer them anew to God. This takes several steps: not only being sorry for our sins which we call repentance but it also means changing our outlook so that we adopt God's instead of our own.

The world is always asking the Church to tell it how it can escape the consequences of its sins. But the Church ought to have no interest in this. Its concern is to tell people how to escape from sin itself. Hosea the prophet understood long ago that the consequences of sin cannot be escaped. A price is always paid by someone. In Hosea 8:7 we read: "They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind," and in Proverbs 22:8 we read: "He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow." It is a foolish person who sows wild oats and prays for a crop failure.

All year round, but especially during Lent, we need to talk plainly with God, uncovering our souls and making a clean breast of everything. Of course, we won't be telling Him anything He does not already know, but each of us needs the therapy of doing the telling. Isn't this what group therapies are all about in our modern day? But how shall we get started in our talk with God? We assume that prayers and regular church attendance is already a part of your life. Now take the Ten Commandments, the basis of all law in the world both secular and religious, and study them. Don't you see them differently than when you studied

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DABS OF THOUGHT

The teachings of the true faith have been overthrown. No longer is there the strict observance of the canons. License to commit sin has spread through the land; and those who have entered office by favor reward their masters with the gift that pleases them most — license to commit any sin they please. Just judgment is dead. Everyone follows the whims of his own heart and wickedness has no bounds at all. (St. Basil the Great)

There's only one God; He just knows how to look everywhere. (A 4-year-old child)

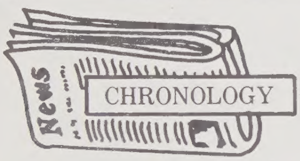
Did you ever promise, when you were sick, that if God would make you well, you would change your life, go to Church to worship Him more regularly and other noble thoughts? Then why do so many forget such promises, such opportunities to recognize God as a vital part of their life? One can get sick again. Being well now is no reason to put religious inclinations off until sickness strikes again. Offer yourself to God at all times — and He will see you through your illnesses — He doesn't need your promises to render care and mercy upon you and your suffering body in time of need.

Picture a beautiful home, with a lovely living room overlooking a lake. Bright, cheery rugs and curtains, with sunlight streaming in abundant southern exposure windows.
BUT — the temperature in this room is 28°F. — quite unliveable. It is warmth that makes it liveable, not the appointments; and so it is with human beings.

The Orthodox Herald is rooted in the life of the church.

The Greek word **Akathistos** means that one does not sit down during the singing of this service. This service is known as the Akathists and the one to the Virgin Mary is sung in many churches during Great Lent. This service was sung for the first time in Constantinople in the year 626.

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March 1991

DIED. Mother Alexandra of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City, PA. The former Princess Ileana of Romania was the foundress and former abbess of the monastery.

PHILOPTOCHOS, which means "Friends of the Poor," is the official philanthropic organization for women of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Americas. It has over 30,000 members in 500 chapters in the U.S., Canada, Central and South America. It was organized 60 years ago.

THE NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION of the Bible, which was recently released is not authorized for use in the Orthodox Church of America. It uses contemporary language, eliminates many male-centered terms, and all the thees and thous. It replaces the 1952 version. "In addition to concerns about male-centered language, the translators tried to be sensitive to issues of race and homosexuality," according to Mr. Ari L. Goldman.

ACCORDING TO DATABASE in U.S. News and World Report per capita church contributions were $60 in 1961 and $376 in 1988.

THE ORTHODOX COMMUNITIES OF WASHINGTON STATE'S PUGENT SOUND region were treated this past summer to the singing of the 24 voice choir of Leningrad Theological Schools (USSR) at various services of the Orthodox Churches in that region. The Seattle-area Orthodox communities are now aiding their Russian brothers through donations of cloth for monastic robes and books for the seminary library.

THE STANDING CONFERENCE OF ORTHODOX BISHOPS (SCOBA) meeting in October will receive a report from the Study and Planning Commission condemning the Uniates in Czechoslovakia and the Ukraine for taking churches from the Orthodox. Secondly, the Commission is urging SCOBA to recognize an official translation for the Bible, Creed, Lord's Prayer and the Divine Liturgy in English. Thirdly, it is urging the revitalization of the permanent Diaconate in this country.

THE BICENTENNIAL OF ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA is in 1994. The Congress of Russian Americans, P.O. Box 818, Nyack, NY 10960 is petitioning the U.S. Postal Service to issue a commemorative stamp to honor this event.

GARY KASPEROV, the world chess champion, announced prior to the recent world match with A. Karpov that he would not play under the Soviet red flag. He played under the traditional white-blue-red Russian flag that served as the national and commercial flag since 1667, the reign of tsar Alexis Romanov.

INSTALLED AS patriarch of Kiev and all the Ukraine was Mstyslav I, 92-year-old head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the United States, which is headquartered in Bound Brook, NJ.

A CAMPAIGN TO END TURKISH CONTROL OVER THE ORTHODOX CHURCH is being spearheaded by Fr. Dombalis of Richmond, VA. He said that the Turkish government still imposes its will over the selection of the Patriarch of Constantinople and closed the only Orthodox seminary in Turkey earlier this century. He wants the United Nations to censure Turkey.

A CLASSIC ORTHODOX BOOK HAS BEEN REISSUED. "The Way of the Pilgrim and the Pilgrim Continues His Way" is now available from Oakwood Publications, 616 Knob Hill Ave., Redondo Beach, CA 90277 for $8.95 plus $2 postage for first book, 50 cents for each additional book. An anonymous Orthodox pilgrim roamed the Russian steppes reciting the Jesus Prayer in order to obey Christ's injunction to "pray without ceasing."

THE ST. CYPRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (O.C.A.) in Richmond, VA is located in the newly dedicated historical district of the city known as the Ginter Park area.

PATRIARCH DIODOROS OF Jerusalem has called upon all Orthodox bishops to review the role of Orthodox participation in ecumenical agencies.

THERE IS AN ORTHODOX GROUP at Georgetown University. Regular services are held. It publishes a newsletter and has produced a hymnal. To receive a copy of the "Eastern Standard" or a hymnal, write Georgetown Christian Fellowship, 113 Healy Hall, Georgetown University, Washington, DC 20057.

A STATUE WAS UNVEILED at the United Nations recently. Donated by the Soviet Mission, it shows St. George killing a dragon. It was made from Soviet and American missile parts and entitled "Good Defeats Evil". The statue was made by Zurab Tsereteli, as Soviet artist.

AN IKON OF ST. IRENE continues to weep intermittently at a Greek Orthodox Cathedral on 23rd Ave. in Queens, New York.

NAMES OF STREETS AND CITIES are being changed very rapidly in the USSR. If you plan to travel there you can get the latest copy of a four-page weekly "The Soviet Travel Newsletter" for $1 and a stamped, self-addressed envelope from American Tourist Manuals, Box 636 Federal Square, Newark, NJ 07101. Also available, the latest map of Moscow, which even pinpoints McDonald's. Send $5.95 for this.

PROBLEMS CONCERNING OLDER PEOPLE can now be discussed with attorneys who specialize in elder-law. They are versed in age discrimination, guardianship, housing, Medicare, public benefits, etc. To contact one or to find about fees, write for free brochure: "Questions and Answers When Looking for an Elder Law Attorney" from National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, Inc., 655 N Alvernon Way, Ste. 108, Tucson, AZ 85711.

THE ANNUNCIATION

The Annunciation is celebrated on March 25/April 7. The liturgical changes for this Holy Day are very extensive, depending upon which day in Great Lent it falls. Most Service Books have pages of instructions reading: If this day falls on the Saturday of the 3rd or 4th week or during the 3rd week or on Monday of the 4, 5, 6th weeks, etc. such and such changes are made in the services on these days. What is especially interesting is that this year a rarity occurs — the Annunciation and Pascha/Easter are to be celebrated on the same day by those who are on the Julian calendar. This combination of the two Holy Days is called **Kyriopascha**, i.e. the "Lord's Pascha". The combining of the hymns for this day is interesting, instructional and exciting.

The Holy Day of Annunciation is beautifully told in St. Luke 1:26-38. The Archangel Gabriel gives her a message: "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" The Holy Virgin was greatly amazed at the angel's message. In her humility she did not consider herself worthy of such an honor and she wondered how this could be possible. The angel reassured her: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus."

The angel explained that the Holy Spirit would come upon her. From this union of divinity and most pure humanity would be born the Son of God who was to be perfect man and perfect God.

In complete obedience to the will of God, when the Holy Virgin saw what was to be and what was asked of her, she spoke with words of trust and submission to the will of God and she replied: "Behold, the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be according to your word." And it is written that with her consent "the angel departed from her."

Her perception of God begs a question. What is your perception of God? Think before you answer. What you answer will tell you a great deal about your relationship with Him. The Holy Virgin knew Him as the "Holy Mighty One and Holy is His name." Luke 1:49. Her view of God called forth — not fear and aloofness — but worship and adoration. She believed the Old Testament Scriptures and did not hesitate to proclaim their fulfillment (verses 50-55). To her, those Scriptures revealed the greatness and mercy of the God she loved. Her song (verses 46-55) was a personal one that sprang from a love-filled heart. Obedience (though it must have meant fending questions from curious neighbors, raised eyebrows and worse from those who could not understand) has brought her joy as well as pain. Her focus was on God rather than on herself.

Your "song" must also spring from your perception of who God is to you personally. Take time on the day of Annunciation to ask: can you say with Mary: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; and my spirit rejoices in God my savior"? (verses 46-47)

RESPONDING

Perhaps the theme of Great Lent but certainly that of the great Holy Day of Annunciation, which comes during this period, is one of surrender to the will of God. To this end we might concentrate on the Virgin's words in Luke 1:38: "Let it be to me according to your word."

If we would simply try and lace ourselves with Mary and listen to her words of submission to God's will, we would find a restful peace. Instead of thinking about these words and trying to understand them, we should just listen to them being spoken to us.

Our example is Mary, she is so open, so free, so trusting. She is completely willing to hear words that go far beyond her own comprehension. She knows that the words spoken by the angel come from God. She seeks clarification, but she does not question the authority of the words. She senses that Gabriel's message will radically interrupt her life and she is afraid, but she does not withdraw. She responds with complete surrender and so becomes not only the Mother of Jesus, the Son of God, but also the Mother of all who believe in Him.

In these days of noise and action it is hard to be still but keep listening to these words as words that summarize the deepest possible response to God's loving action within you. God wants to let the Holy Spirit guide your life, but are you prepared to let it happen?

THE CROSS AND IKONS

On the first Sunday of Great Lent we stress the place of ikons in our life and a few weeks later on the third Sunday the Cross is emphasized. Why are these two brought to our attention? Perhaps St. John of Damascus said it well when he tried to explain the Christian religion to non-Christians around the year 700 in his **Exposition of the Orthodox Faith**. He is considered to be the strongest defender of ikons in the Ikonoclastic Controversy.

He wrote that the Holy Spirit surrounds the ikons of the saints with a certain halo of grace. Wherever the Cross is erected, the malicious designs of the evil one are defeated. How often a soul sunk in sin has been touched and converted by the sight of an ikon or the Cross; how often have sacred paintings comforted and encouraged devout people especially at the moment of death! While gazing upon an ikon we pray with greater recollection, holy ikons are steps whereby we ascend more easily in spirit to heaven. Ikons are also a constant admonition to us; either by placing vividly before us one of the truths of the faith, or exhorting us to imitate the example of the saints. In the presence of the holy ikons, whether in the church or in our home, we develop a feeling of reverence and pious fear of God.

Keep the holy ikons and Cross **prominent** in your home and give God and His saints a place in directing your life.

PRESS FUND

Many thanks — Spasebo — to all who are helping us to keep printing. We have just been hit with another postal rate increase. With your help — "we're hanging in there." Mary White, Andrew Thoryk, Alexandra Spanovic, Anna Gardner, Donald Brelinsky, Anonymous, Marian Glovinsky, Irene Repaske, Leonette Williams, Dn. Joseph Hotrovich, Ann Sidorick, Nida Babich, Vera Yurchak, Mary Kochmaruk, Mary Zacharkiw, Frank Moroz, Victor Karaway, John Komisin, Julianna Kuzmack, Julia Hojnacki, Mary Eurist, Margaret Mihaly, Nicholas Zobec, Valentina Mikulich, Stella Eskoff, Dorothy Sawko, Patricia Pavelchak, Margaret Balog, Mary Mihaly, Mary Zemanik, Dr. Dimitrios Pappas, Marge Yanchisin, Irene Allen, Mary Cooper, George Vickrest, Justine Post, George Brozina, Joseph Chobany, Joe Kienle, Jr., John and Michele Spack and daughter for health of Michael Spack, Sr.

John Volosin in memory of wife Theodora; Helen Palmieri in memory of her parents Mary and Vladimir and brother George; Helen Cudlic in memory of parents Anne and Basil (Wash) Fedora and husband George; Mary Pysarchyk in memory of her mother who fell asleep in Lord on Feb. 20, 1990; Paul and Marion Stenko in memory of his parents; Anna Tymoczko in memory of her parents Theodore and Mary Bius; Mary Parker in memory of Matzka Family; John and Sheila Hrapchak in memory of friend and choir member of Potomac, Md., Bill Dzubak who fell asleep in the Lord on January 7, 1991; in memory of Val Senofsky who fell asleep in the Lord on Nov. 9, 1990 and his brothers Father Nicholas and Father George Seniavsky.

ARE YOU GOING TO CONFESSION?

We hear this question asked around most Orthodox Churches this time of year. Too often it is asked by people wearing their "long" faces. Why should this privilege which Jesus Christ died for cause such an unfavorable response in so many? One reason may be that we see confession as an end and not as only part of a bigger procedure. If we put it in its proper perspective — that it must be followed by repentance, the turning away from the sin and really trying to improve ourselves in the eyes of God, we would comprehend that this is the harder part.

Another reason for the reluctance may be that many have not bothered to study or read about confession. They keep going on the knowledge, which was given them at seven years of age, when they were being prepared for their First Holy Confession. They would admit that the types of sin and the circumstances of life make new and different sins come to the forefront. Here is a partial guide we could use for self-examination before we go to confession.

Have I been responding to God's creative and redeeming love by loving Him above all things with all my heart and mind and strength?

Do I resist examining myself before God in confession for fear that I may have to humble the image I have made of myself?

Do I resist seeking to know God's will for me now for fear that it may prove contrary to my own selfish will?

Have I made full use of the means God has given us, Scripture, Church, Sacraments and Prayer, to know Him better, to learn and to do His will?

Have I served and worshipped God in hopes of winning His favor for my own ends rather than to strengthen myself in carrying out His mission to my neighbors and to mankind?

Do I judge others severely where I find excuses for myself?

Do I truly forgive others as our Lord forgives me?

Do I love others wholly to do them good or in order to be loved in return?

Do I make the best possible use of the time, abilities and resources God has given me for His purposes especially in the furtherance of His Church?

Am I a faithful witness to the saving love of Jesus Christ in my family, to my friends, to my parish members, to my community?

If you justify yourself on these questions, you are spiritually blind or a hypocrite. If you fail to measure up you are a sinner. In either case you are the one who Christ came to redeem and you are in need of prayer, confession and communion with Him. So use this Lenten season to grow in the grace, the love and the strength of our Lord.

Are you going to confession? The answer should be — Yes, I can never thank God enough for the privilege.

ST. BENEDICT OF NURSIA (ITALY) 480?-547?

St. Benedict and his twin sister, St. Scholastica, (480-546) were born in Italy at the end of the fifth century during the time when the Goths (Arian heretics) were establishing and defending their kingdom. The Byzantine general Belisarius defeated the Goths in 547 and re-established Orthodox Christianity on the Italian peninsula; however, this was not accomplished during Benedict's life. The defeat of the Goths took almost 40 years, during which the long wars devastated the countryside. It was during this period of upheaval that Benedict established his monasteries.

Benedict's father was a well-to-do landowner who lived in the Sabine Hills near Nursia. Benedict was educated at home until age fourteen, when he traveled to Rome with a nurse to complete his education. He was horrified by the decadence and immorality of Rome and fled the city with the knowledge that God was calling him to monasticism. He sojourned for a short time in a monastery near Enfide 30 miles from Rome but left to become a hermit. He was tonsured by a monk named Romanus and lived in a cave near Subiaco for three years. The monastic practices in Italy at the end of the fifth century were the same practiced by St. Anthony and his followers in the Egyptian deserts (see Orth. Herald Jan. 1984). Benedict felt that this type of life was too austere and modified the system to give a balance of manual labor, study and prayer. He immediately attracted postulates interested in learning his type of monastic life.

About 530, Benedict and his faithful followers moved to Monte Cassino, where he built his famous monastery. During this time, he laid down his Rule, which depends heavily on the writings of the desert fathers, especially John Cassian. No detail was too small for Benedict and the Rule regulates the complete life of a Benedictine monk from the shoes he wears, the food he eats, the time he prays and to the time he sleeps. The Rule calls for an abbot who is elected for life and has the power to mediate the rule for individuals or communities under his control. The economic, spiritual and political system established by Benedict became the essence of Western monasticism for more than 600 years and Benedictine monks dominated Western Europe for almost 1000 years (500-1500 A.D.).

The great monastery built by Benedict on Monte Casino was sacked by the Lombards near the end of the sixth century but stood as a bastion of western monasticism under its destruction in an Allied air raid on February 15, 1944. The monastery was rebuilt according to the ancient plan in 1950's.

Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome (540-604) compiled the only ancient biography of St. Benedict, called the Dialogue, about 50 years after the saint's death. Gregory details a number of miracles and temptations of the saint (the latter reads as if they were plagiarized from the life of St. Anthony). Some scholars question some of the details, but undoubtedly Benedict was one of the great Christian Saints; his rule, which shows great spiritual leadership, brought many pagan, immoral and unbelievers into the Christian fold. Unlike the Rule of St. Basil, which allows for individual relationship with God, it is based on a corporate program. When individuality arose during the renaissance, the influence of the Benedictines waned and the unity found in Eastern monasticism ceased to exist in the West.

Larry R. Sherman, Ph.D.

•Plain Talk With God

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them in Sunday School? Or take the Beatitudes, or Jesus' Life and Eternal Teaching as told in the Parables. Check your daily life against them. Where have you failed to measure up? Tell it to God. Simply talk it out with Him, go to Confession and ask for His Divine forgiveness and His Grace to overcome your sins in the future.

If we do this, Lent will not be a boring and despised period of time which we ignore, but it will be a spiritual and moral vacation which we are taking.

EDITORS' NOTES

We heard that it was recommended to the bishops of SCOBA that a uniform translation be done of the prayers and Divine Liturgy of the Church. This certainly is long overdue. But it may be that the best translations can be done now when we have people who are still fluent in Church Slavonic and in the liturgical languages which are used in the Orthodox world and who are fluent in the English language. Previously, translations were done by people who had strengths in one or the other. Hopefully, the translators will be put to work soon.

In the April 1990 issue we included the following under Chronology. "Archeologists have found remains of a Byzantine church constructed in America in 480 A.D. It is located in a southern Connecticut state forest. Evidence points to the fact that it might have been built by monks who were fleeing persecution in North Africa when heresies were sanctioned. Arian overlords burned monasteries, confiscated properties and bishops and monks were exiled. Some fled by ship "across the void of waves." This note brought an avalanche of requests for more information. The information was taken from a newsletter **On Site** of the American Institute for Archaeological Research headquartered in New Hampshire. The article was written by John Gallagher and it was printed in 1987. He did research in Cockaponset State Forest in Guilford, Connecticut. **Our Sunday Visitor,** a Roman Catholic newspaper, carried an article in its December 2, 1990 issue by Tricia Hempel concerning this theory. Please get the addresses of the Institute and of the newspapers from your library if you are interested in pursuing this.

Lent is a time when we are encouraged to give more time to prayer and fasting. We may well say — that's fine but when can I find the time? We must acknowledge the importance of prayer and make it an activity of our day. First we must ask ourselves — Do I sometimes make my day more challenging by filling it with so much activity and business that I have no time or little time for myself? When I am physically tired, do I feel the need to push myself to do even more?

At such times you need a prayer break! As you pray, you will be open and receptive to Divine help. You will have a clear and open path, and God and you together can keep your thinking positive, your attitude happy, and your day fulfilling.

Encourage yourself to stop during the day for a prayer break and let it become your energizing, strengthening time. Whether it be an instant acknowledgment of God's presence and help, or a few quiet moments to relax alone, a prayer break will get you through the day in good order. God assures us that He will hear us as we read in Jeremiah 29:12-14: "You will call upon me and go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart, I will be found by you, says the Lord."

God Be With You,

Fr. Stroyen, Ph.D.
Protopresbyter

IN THE MIDDLE OF THINGS

Christianity has a lot to say about new beginnings and about endings, but not so much about the middle. And yet, it's the middle that we are mostly in. When was the last time the phone rang that you weren't in the middle of things? When was the last time you resolved to do something important as soon as you weren't in the middle of something?

Here we are in the middle of things. And for all the talk about beginnings and endings, it's the middle that the Church reminds us is also important. Christ came into the middle of things, and that is what makes His life significant for us. He came where we are and He wants to come where we are now. It's when we are in the middle of things that we need Christ with us most.

On one Sunday during the year we pay passing tribute to the middle: mid-Lent or Cross Sunday, halfway to Pascha/Easter. Time to take another look at where we started in Lent and where we're going and to make the necessary mid-course corrections to get us from the one to the other.

This Cross, mid-Lent Sunday on March 10, is a celebration. The Cross, surrounded with beautiful flowers, is brought into the middle of the Church. What a contrast to the dark coverings on the tables and the absence of flowers on the altar! But even in Lent, we need to celebrate. The Cross is planted in the middle of Lent like the tree of life in paradise in order that those who look upon it will find strength and courage to see Lent to its end. For those in the mid-life crisis (between 13 and 99), this is a helpful reminder to celebrate and give thanks for God who meets us in the middle of things and holds us up on our way to the end.

ALASKA FUND

Copies go to missions and missioners in Alaska thanks to: Martha Bizub, Margaret Mihaly, Valentina Mikulich, Andrew Thoryk, Mary White, Marian Glovincky, George Vickrest, Joseph Chobany, Paul Stenko, Patricia Pavelchak, E.S. Green, Dorothy Sawko, Walter Zachary in memory of his parents, Peter and Alexandra, and brother Jon, Dn. Joseph Hotrovich, Vera Yurchak, Frank Moroz, Victor Karaway, Anonymous.

•The Sundays of Lent

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Jesus orients us toward His Crucifixion on the Cross. He warns us what the cost of discipleship will be.

This is called The Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross. It falls in mid-Lent. The synax for this day tells us: "Today in the midst of fasting and our perilous and strenuous journey, the Life-giving Cross was erected by the Holy Fathers to give us rest and refreshment, to lighten our burden and give us courage for the remaining task."

March 17. The 4th Sunday of Lent. Gospel Reading - Mark 9:17-31.

Jesus heals a child whom His disciples could not heal. When they asked Him why they could not heal him, Jesus reminded them of the need for prayer and fasting. He continues to lead them toward the Cross telling them that He will be killed and that He will rise in three days.

This Sunday is dedicated to St. John Climacus, a faster, who wrote a book **The Ladder of Divine Ascent** in which He gives 30 steps, one for each year of Jesus' life, on the way to unity of man with God.

March 24. The 5th Sunday of Lent. Gospel Reading - Mark 10:32-45.

Jesus gives the third announcement of His coming Crucifixion and Passion on the Cross. He then discusses this with the Sons of Zebedee.

This Sunday is dedicated to Mary of Egypt. She was a great penitent. She reached a high degree of perfection after being a great sinner and serves as an example that it is never too late to recognize our sins, be sorry for them, and do something about them.

March 31. This is Palm Sunday, a Sunday which forms a bridge between Passion or Holy Week.



For many years I have kept a list of foods which we eat during the Great Lent. It is amazing how this list changes from year to year. We look forward to the soups whether it be meatless borsch, schi, mushroom or sauerkraut and red bean. Another one, which only part of this family likes, is Potato Soup with caraway seed dumplings. They like the soup but aren't fanciers of any kind of pasta.

CARAWAY SEED DUMPLING SOUP

1 cup flour
¼ tsp. salt
1 egg
¼ tsp. caraway seed
6 medium potatoes diced
2½ qts. water
2 Tbls. flour
3 Tbls. butter or oil
1 medium onion, grated
salt and pepper

Combine flour, salt, beaten egg and caraway seed. Mix well. Drop off end of teaspoon into boiling water. Dip spoon into water to keep dumplings from sticking to it. Cook until tender. Timing depends on size of dumpling. Drain. Meanwhile, boil potatoes in 2½ qt. water until soft. Add dumplings. Mix flour, butter, and onion. Saute in frying pan until lightly browned. Add bit of soup to browned mixture, mix until smooth and add all to soup mixture. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to boil. Serve.

Variations: 1) Don't brown flour. 2) Add sauteed mushroom bits. 3) Add bit of celery with potatoes.

Prayer is the one weapon the enemy cannot duplicate or counterfeit.

The Orthodox Church is based on heritage. It is a Church that is rich with traditions and customs. This heritage is what makes our religion unique and different from the rest of our diverse country. For instance, the beautiful chants, the incense, the richly decorated robes and the icons distinguish us from others. Should this heritage be changed because we live in a different society from where the traditions originated and developed?



March 1991

1. Isa 7:1-14
2. Heb 3:12-16
3. Heb 1:10-2:3 Sunday
4. Isa 8:13-9:7
5. 9:9-10:4
6. 10:12-20
7. 11:10-12:2
8. 13:2-13
9. Heb 10:32-38
10. 4:14-5:6 Sunday
11. Isa 14:24-32
12. 25:1-9
13. 26:21-27:9
14. 28:14-22
15. 29:13-23
16. Heb 6:9-12
17. 6:13-20 Sunday
18. Isa 37:33-38:6
19. 40:18-31
20. 41:4-14
21. 42:5-16
22. 45:11-17
23. Heb 9:24-28
24. 9:11-14 Sunday
25. Isa 48:17-49:4
26. 49:6-10
27. 58:1-11
28. 65:8-16
29. 66:10-24
30. Heb 12:28-13:8
31. Phil 4:4-9 Sunday

BIBLE STUDY

The reading for the 16th March is the reading for the 3rd Saturday of Great Lent. This reading from Hebrews 6:9-12 brings to mind the very beautiful, touching prayer which is said at the **Litiya**, the blessing of the five loaves at the Great Vesper Service. The priest prays: "We pray for every Christian soul that is afflicted and weary in well-doing and is in need of God's mercies and help."

St. Paul wrote his letter not to a church but to individuals who had accepted the Christian faith but were beginning to lose their enthusiasm and joy in their Christian lives. He felt that there was need and hope for them to reclaim this joy. They had not fallen away from the faith completely, they still practiced charity to their fellow Christians (10). They followed the instructions given by Christ in Matthew 25:40; "Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me." As St. Paul wrote them: "Toward His name have you ministered."

He also wrote, "God is not unrighteous to forget," using the thought from Matt 25:40: "God is strictly accurate to remember," and from the angel's message to Cornelius in Acts 10:31: "Thine alms are had in remembrance before God."

There is a lesson for us in the reading and in the prayer. We all face times in our Christian life when we burn out. The Church Services have nothing to say to us, the teaching we do in Sunday School or Bible Class or the singing we do in the choir or the service we give as a committee person becomes a labor without joy. We start to think: "I've done this long enough, I need a rest, let someone else take over." We can give up our worship and our service to our parish, but if we do we are lost. St. Paul tells us that we must have the same zeal in keeping at our faith as we have in extending charity which God remembers. He instructs us not to become lazy or allow our lack of enthusiasm to give up, but we must continue in His service like Abraham did, and we will receive God's promise as he did. We must go one with determination and a wonderful thing will happen, the light of enthusiasm and the joy will return to us in time. We must continue in the habits of Christian life and of the Church and pray for God's mercy to help us "who are weary in well-doing."

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